

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO

USEC BRUSSELS

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ORIT, SP

SUBJECT: NEW SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER BACKS LABOR REFORM

1. NEW SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER ENRIQUE DE LA MATA

AMDE A STRONG PITCH FOR LABOR REFORM DURING A JULY 26

MEETING OF THE PERMANENT

COMMITTEE OF THE SSO (SPANISH

SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION) CONGRESS IN MADRID. HE EMPHASIZED

THAT HE WAS "FULLY IDENTIFIED" WITH THE (LIBERAL) LABOR

REFORM POLICIES OF HIS PREDECESSOR MARTIN VILLA (NOW

INTERIOR MINISTER). DE LA MATA FURTHER DECLARED THAT THE

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GOVERNMENT WAS GIVING CLOSE ATTENTION TO LABOR

REFORM, NECESSARILY LINKED WITH POLITICAL REFORM.

2. LATER THE SAME DAY IN BARCELONA, DE LA MATA CONFIRMED TO A PROVINCIAL SSO AUDIENCE THAT LABOR REFORM WOULD "MOVE FORWARD AS PROGRAMMED". WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE PENDING LEGALIZATION OF THE OPPOSITION LABOR GROUPS WOULD INCLUDE THE COMMUNIST DOMINATED WORKERS COMMISSIONS (SWC), THE SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER LEFT THE DOOR AJAR FOR SUCH AN EVENTUALITY. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD FIRST HAVE TO BE DETERMINED WHETHER 1) SWC WAS AN AUTHENTIC TRADE UNION OR JUST AN IDEOLOGICAL MOVEMENT, AND 2) SWC REALLY DESIRED TO BE LEGALIZED.

3. IN ANOTHER ADDRESS, SSO SECRETARY GENERAL JOSE SOCIAS HUMBERT TOLD THE SAME MADRID GROUP THAT LABOR REFORM COULD NOT BE ISOLATED FROM POLITICAL REFORM. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT "UNITY OF THE LABOR POLITICAL MOVEMENT CANNOT BE IMPOSED", BUT MUST BE FREELY ARRIVED AT BY WORKERS OF DIFFERENT TRADE UNION ELEMENTS (THE UGT, USO LINE). SOCIAS SAID THAT IT WOULD BE UP TO THE WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS IN "COMPLETE LIBERTY" TO DECIDE ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEM THEY WISHED TO HAVE.

4. COMMENT: DE LA MATA'S MADRID AND BARCELONA STATEMENTS NOW PLACE HIM SQUARELY ON THE RECORD AS SUPPORTING THE LIBERAL LABOR REFORM LINE INITIATED BY MARIN VILLA. SOME OF HIS EARLIER DECLARATION AS MINISTER INTIMATING THAT THE SSO AS AN INSTITUTION MIGHT STILL HAVE A USEFUL ROLE TO PLAY, HAD COMPOUNDED THE ISSUE. DURING THE COURSE OF THE AMBASSADORS JULY 26 CALL ON THE FOREIGN MINISTER, OREJA ASSURED HIM THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO MOVE FORWARD WITH SYNDICAL REFORM, CONTINUING THE SAME REFORM POLICIES SET BY MARTIN VILLA, AND INDICATED THAT THE REFERENDUM (IT MAY NOW BE CALLED A "CONSULTATION)". WOULD STILL INCLUDE A PROPOSITION DEALING WITH LABOR.

5. THE EMBASSY LEARNED FROM GOVERNMENT LABOR OFFICIALS THAT DURING THE FORMATION OF THE SUAREZ CABINET, MARTIN VILLA HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SHIFTING TO THE LABOR MINISTER SLOT, IT BEING UNDERSTOOD THAT HE WOULD ALSO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTINUE TO HANDLE SYNDICAL REFORM MATTERS (I.E. THE SEPARATE CABINET POSITION OF SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER WOULD THUS HAVE BEEN ABOLISHED). THIS NEVER MATERIALIZED HOWEVER, AND MARTIN VILLA ACCEPTED THE INTERIOR MINISTER JOB. IT IS ALSO INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT SOCIAS IS STAYING ON AT LEAST TEMPORARILY AS SSO SECRETARY GENERAL. IT HAD BEEN EXPECTED THAT HE WOULD GO WITH THE DEPARTURE OF HIS FRIEND MARTIN VILLA. HOWEVER A

WELL INFORMED LABOR SOURCE TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT DE
LA MATA HAD ASKED SOCIAS TO STAY ON, FEARING THAT IF
HE LEFT IT WOULD HAVE LOOKED LIKE A VICTORY FOR THE
"BUNKER" AND THEY WOULD HAVE WANTED TO PUT ONE OF THEIR
MEN IN. FURTHER MORE THE SOURCE ADDED, DE LA MATA
RECONGIZED THAT HE WOULD NEED SOCIAS TO MANTAIN CONTACT
WITH THE OPPOSITION LABOR UNIONS.
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